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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: HAITI EARTHQUAKE, OBAMA PRESIDENCY;BERLIN

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- [1](#)1. Lead Stories Summary

ZDF-TV's and ARD-TV's primetime newscasts opened with reports on Haiti, both of which emphasized two main points: the situation is chaotic and U.S. aid efforts on the ground are getting underway. Newspapers led with many different stories: Sueddeutsche and Frankfurter Rundschau highlighted President Obama's first year in office. Die Welt and Berliner Morgenpost showed a large photo of pioneering Springer journalist Ernst Cramer, who died yesterday at the age of 96. Frankfurter Allgemeine led with a story on the parliamentary budget debate, headlined "A quarter of the budget consists of new debts." Editorials focused on the budget debate and the many appointments Germans have with doctors.

- [1](#)2. Aftermath of Haiti Earthquake

ARD-TV's primetime newscast Tagesschau reported: "A week after the earthquake, international assistance is now in full swing, but is reaching the people only slowly because many places are difficult to get to. The UN has therefore set up an airlift and also the U.S. air force is dropping food over Port-au-Prince." The newscast emphasized that the situation in Haiti is "chaotic" and that "the logistical challenges are enormous," adding: "Many just want to leave the country. Hundreds are queuing in front of the U.S. Embassy in the hope of getting a U.S. visa." Tagesschau showed a Haitian man saying that the U.S. should take over the country. "The U.S. presence is becoming increasingly visible and the U.S. army announced the opening of a second airport in the seriously destroyed city of Jacmel," a reporter stated.

Berliner Zeitung's report headlined "Help for Haiti from the air" and noted in its intro that "the U.S. has begun to drop aid supplies from the air for the victims of the earthquake in Haiti. According to the U.S. army, 15,000 liters of water and 14,000 food packages reached the people in the northeast part of the capital of

Port-au-Prince." Tagesspiegel reported on its front-page that "a U.S. plane that dropped food and water for the first time over Port-au-Prince raised hope that the provision of supplies will improve."

Handelsblatt editorialized: "Haiti has been an impoverished country for a long time. It is now completely destroyed. Only a Marshall Plan with global support could help the country emerge from this desolate situation.... A protectorate, a word that was forbidden for a long time and was even seen as high treason, is now being considered as the only solution. Haiti needs godfathers and godmothers to take care of the country. The U.S., Europe, the UN and countries like Brazil and Chile must cooperate and help until the Haitians can one day help themselves."

In an op-ed for Tagesspiegel, a medical expert commented: "The earthquake finally woke up the international community; the rescue operation that was overdue for decades has finally begun. It will only work if it is continued for years after medical care has been provided to those injured and buildings have been repaired and re-built. . To release the chronically sick patient after only treating the wounds would be irresponsible. Under certain circumstances, the catastrophe could be the beginning of a better time in the history of the Caribbean country."

ARD-TV's Tagesthemen commented: "It is true that the UN was paralyzed when the catastrophe in Haiti unfolded.... It is true the UN has a blown-up and often badly coordinated bureaucracy, which makes the organization even more incapable of taking action in times of crises.... It is true that we see the UN's helplessness on the

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Balkans, in Africa or Haiti then we see its actual assistance. So should the United Nations be done away with? Before we come to a conclusion, let's look at some facts: the truth is that people everywhere and the governments that represent them are the United Nations.... The UN is as strong as its member states want it to be, in regarding to both its finances and other matters. When the power politics of important countries paralyze the UN and provide ridiculous mandates, it is at the expense of the poorest people in war and crisis regions, just as we are seeing now in Haiti."

### 13. Obama Presidency - One year On

Frankfurter Allgemeine's Klaus-Dieter Frankenberger wrote in a front-page editorial: "Obama's achievements have not been insignificant: America's reputation has been restored in a part of the world -- it was never damaged in other parts.... Europe now basically accepts America's lead role. Regardless of the broad skepticism, Obama kept his word and drastically increased the U.S. military and civilian engagement in Afghanistan. Afghanistan is now his war, the war of the Nobel Peace Prize laureate. Ultimately, more Americans will enjoy a health insurance after the reform. Given the resistance, this is not insignificant.... In foreign policy, he might have to choose a tougher approach.... Iran is ignoring his extended hand. The leadership in Beijing has humiliated him. Moscow responded coolly to the offer of a new beginning. And the Mideast conflict is proving to be resistant to solutions. Obama will hopefully no longer allow America's enemies and those who want to be partners to make him look like a fool. And he should not get used to arguing with Washington's strongest allies."

Handelsblatt's editorial headlined "Obama can do everything but magic" and added: "Hardly anything is nicer than seeing a star topple. Those, who analyze Barack Obama's first year in office like an accountant by comparing the intentions and the results, can satisfy this desire.... Has he failed all along the line? Not at all. Many of the things the U.S. government tackled a year ago cannot be done in twelve months. With a bit of luck, they can be done in one legislative period. Health care, finances and climate protection are huge projects that touch massive political and industrial interests. He did achieve what many thought would be impossible: to stop the economic decline.... The political attitude in Washington has changed. Issues and goals are being discussed with a goal to reach a solution. The pragmatist Obama looks at the

best argument, not an ideology."

Spiegel Online reported that the Republicans won the Senate seat in Massachusetts, describing it as a "setback for Obama." The webzine headlined: "Electoral disaster threatens his health care reform," and noted: "Serious defeat for Barack Obama: one year after his inauguration, the Democrats lost the former Senate seat of Edward Kennedy in Massachusetts and with it a strategic majority in the Senate. The President's giant project of health care reform has now become uncertain." In a derogatory commentary, Spiegel Online's Washington correspondent Gabor Steingart stated: "Barack Obama's magic is no longer working. His supporters, who believed in the promises of hope and change, are disillusioned. The President has failed to change America's reality in his first year. Today, he arouses feelings of pity instead of enthusiasm. The inappropriate feeling of pity creeps over those who listen to the American President today. We still call Barack Obama the most powerful man in the world because that's what we always call U.S. Presidents. However, this is no longer the case. His powerlessness looms very large."

Under the headline "Obama's tough landing," Frankfurter Rundschau opined: "When Obama moved into the White House a year ago, many adored the son of a white globetrotter from Kansas and a Kenyan man.... Everybody could see in Obama what he or she wanted. A

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majority in the U.S. saw hope for a better future. A year later, contours and policies of the President have become visible. In foreign policy, he reclaimed the lead role of the U.S. in a multipolar world after the hubris and militancy of the Bush years. He reestablished its lead role not as an arrogant hegemonic power but within a network of partnerships.... Under Obama, the U.S. has a more realistic picture of the world and the world sees the U.S. in more friendly light. This is not a small achievement for a young presidency. In the U.S., Obama has a different effect. He polarizes and divides the country.... There is not yet an anti-Obama sentiment - he is still a long way away from becoming an American Gorbachev, who is respected throughout the world and laughed about at home. However, the Senate race in Massachusetts is a warning shot. Prior to the Congressional elections this autumn, doubts are rising whether Obama and the Democrats should be given all the power in the country. The second year will not become easier."

FT Deutschland commented: "It will be difficult for Obama to buck the trend in his second year, although he thinks highly of the opportunities international cooperation offers. Paradise-like approval rates in Germany mean little given that half of the Americans have fallen out of love with him. Healthcare reform is still stuck in Congress, and important Congressional elections will come up in autumn. Given this, other projects Obama's fans elsewhere in the world would like to see happening are getting a lower priority: a planned climate protection bill in the U.S. and the mediation of peace in the Middle East. Obama cannot be blamed for these developments. The power of the American president in the democratic system of the U.S. is significantly limited by local interests. He has tried and deserves gratitude."

MURPHY